

profits. Meanwhile, Minnesota seniors are at the mercy of complex and confusing drug company rules, matched by the rising cost of drugs, costs that make gas prices seem stable.

Prescription drugs have increased at twice the rate of inflation. Medicare folks pay as much as 10 times more than vets do through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, that is no way to treat the greatest generation. We can and must do right by them. We must end the drug company charade and enact real prescription drug reform. It is time to let HHS negotiate just like the VA.

Today, the House will pass the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act. Let us end the scam and give the greatest generation the dignity they so deserve. Vote "yes" on H.R. 4.

CHAVEZ BEGINS THIRD TERM IN VENEZUELA

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Venezuelan president invoked Fidel Castro as the premier socialist model which, in his theory, is the economic model for not only Venezuela but the entire world.

Mr. Speaker, my observation about his speech is that it represents a defining illustration of the dichotomous philosophies of ownership and freedom that free markets versus state-owned markets present. For example, Chavez demonstrates this with his continued move to nationalize electrical and telecommunications companies.

Here in Congress with the new majority, they are starting to hammer with this heavy hand of the Federal Government down on small businesses, pharmaceutical companies, energy companies, health insurance and telecommunications industries. I hope that we will carefully examine the consequences of these decisions before repeating the mistakes of socialism. State-owned enterprises are never the solution.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 56) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 56

Resolved, That the following named Members and Delegate be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON RULES.—Mr. McGovern, Mr. Hastings of Florida, Ms. Matsui, Mr. Cardoza, Mr. Welch of Vermont, Ms. Castor, Ms. Sutton.

(2) COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES.—Mr. Frank, Chairman; Mr. Kanjorski, Ms. Waters, Ms. Maloney of New York, Mr. Gutierrez, Ms. Velazquez, Mr. Watt, Mr. Ackerman, Ms. Carson, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Meeke of New York, Mr. Moore of Kansas, Mr. Capuano, Mr. Hinojosa, Mr. Clay, Ms. McCarthy of New York, Mr. Baca, Mr. Lynch, Mr. Miller of North Carolina, Mr. Scott of Georgia, Mr. Al Green of Texas, Mr. Cleaver, Ms. Bean, Ms. Moore of Wisconsin, Mr. Davis of Tennessee, Mr. Sires, Mr. Hodes, Mr. Ellison, Mr. Klein of Florida, Mr. Mahoney, Mr. Wilson of Ohio, Mr. Perlmuter, Mr. Murphy of Connecticut, Mr. Donnelly, Mr. Marshall of Georgia.

(3) COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.—Mr. Peterson, Chairman; Mr. Holden, Mr. McIntyre, Mr. Etheridge, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Baca, Mr. Cardoza, Mr. Scott of Georgia, Mr. Marshall of Georgia, Ms. Herseth, Mr. Cuellar, Mr. Costa, Mr. Salazar, Mr. Ellsworth, Ms. Boyda, Mr. Space, Mr. Walz, Ms. Gillibrand, Mr. Kagen, Mr. Pomeroy, Mr. Davis of Tennessee, Mr. Barrow, Mr. Lampson, Mr. Donnelly, Mr. Mahoney of Florida.

(4) COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—Mr. Lantos, Chairman; Mr. Berman, Mr. Ackerman, Mr. Faleomavaega, Mr. Payne, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Wexler, Mr. Engel, Mr. Delahunt, Mr. Meeke, Ms. Watson, Mr. Smith of Washington, Mr. Carnahan, Mr. Tanner, Ms. Woolsey, Ms. Jackson Lee, Mr. Hinojosa, Mr. Wu, Mr. Miller of North Carolina, Ms. Linda Sanchez of California, Mr. Scott of Georgia, Mr. Costa, Mr. Sires, Ms. Giffords, Mr. Klein of Florida.

(5) COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY.—Mr. Thompson of Mississippi, Chairman; Ms. Loretta Sanchez of California, Mr. Markey, Mr. Dicks of Washington, Ms. Harmon, Mr. DeFazio, Ms. Lowey, Ms. Norton, Ms. Lofgren, Ms. Jackson-Lee, Ms. Christensen, Mr. Etheridge, Mr. Langevin, Mr. Cuellar, Mr. Carney of Pennsylvania, Ms. Clarke, Mr. Al Green of Texas, Mr. Perlmuter.

(6) COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM.—Mr. Waxman, Chairman; Mr. Lantos, Mr. Towns, Mr. Kanjorski, Ms. Maloney of New York, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Kucinich, Mr. Davis of Illinois, Mr. Tierney, Mr. Clay, Ms. Watson, Mr. Lynch, Mr. Higgins, Mr. Yarmuth, Mr. Braley, Ms. Norton, Ms. McCollum, Mr. Cooper of Tennessee, Mr. Van Hollen, Mr. Hodes, Mr. Murphy of Connecticut, Mr. Sarbanes, Mr. Welch of Vermont.

(7) COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS.—Mr. Filner, Chairman; Ms. Brown of Florida, Mr. Snyder, Mr. Michaud, Ms. Herseth, Mr. Mitchell of Arizona, Mr. Hall of New York, Mr. Hare, Mr. Doyle, Mr. Salazar, Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Donnelly, Mr. McNerney, Mr. Space.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 0930

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE NEGOTIATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 510 of House Resolution 6 and as the designee of the majority leader, I call up the bill (H.R. 4) to amend part D of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate lower covered part D drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. NEGOTIATION OF LOWER COVERED PART D DRUG PRICES ON BEHALF OF MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES.

(a) NEGOTIATION BY HHS.—Section 1860D-11 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-111) is amended by striking subsection (i) (relating to noninterference) and inserting the following:

"(i) NEGOTIATION OF LOWER DRUG PRICES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall negotiate with pharmaceutical manufacturers the prices (including discounts, rebates, and other price concessions) that may be charged to PDP sponsors and MA organizations for covered part D drugs for part D eligible individuals who are enrolled under a prescription drug plan or under an MA-PD plan.

"(2) NO CHANGE IN RULES FOR FORMULARIES.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in paragraph (1) shall be construed to authorize the Secretary to establish or require a particular formulary.

"(B) CONSTRUCTION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not be construed as affecting the Secretary's authority to ensure appropriate and adequate access to covered part D drugs under prescription drug plans and under MA-PD plans, including compliance of such plans with formulary requirements under section 1860D-4(b)(3).

"(3) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as preventing the sponsor of a prescription drug plan, or an organization offering an MA-PD plan, from obtaining a discount or reduction of the price for a covered part D drug below the price negotiated under paragraph (1).

"(4) SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than June 1, 2007, and every six months thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on negotiations conducted by the Secretary to achieve lower prices for Medicare beneficiaries, and the prices and price discounts achieved by the Secretary as a result of such negotiations."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall first apply to negotiations and prices for plan years beginning on January 1, 2008.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL). Pursuant to section 510 of House Resolution 6, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) each will control 90 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include therein extraneous matter.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to yield 40 minutes